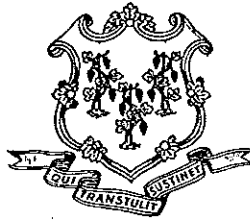


SENATOR MARTIN M. LOONEY
MAJORITY LEADER

Eleventh District
New Haven & Hamden



State of Connecticut
SENATE

State Capitol
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591
132 Fort Hale Road
New Haven, Connecticut 06512
Home: 203-468-8829
Capitol: 860-240-8600
Toll-free: 1-800-842-1420
www.SenatorLooney.cga.ct.gov

February 21, 2012

Good Afternoon Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger and members of the Commerce Committee. I am here to day to testify in support of SB 1, An Act Concerning Connecticut jobs and the Economy.

SB 1 contains some positive amendments to the Step Up program which was included in the jobs legislation we passed in October. These changes will allow the program to make a bigger difference in the lives of our unemployed citizens.

First, I would like to highlight the initiative which would assist veterans who are seeking jobs. It is well known that when veterans return to civilian life, they face many extraordinary challenges, not the least of which is finding and adjusting to civilian employment. This bill would create, within the state Department of Labor, an Unemployed Armed Forces Member Subsidized Training and Employment Program. The program will provide grants to small businesses that hire qualified veterans. These grants will be used to subsidize part of the cost of on-the-job

training and compensation expenses incurred by the business for the first six months that the veteran is employed by the company. This provision will assist both small businesses and veterans as well as address our desire to lower the rate of unemployment.

In addition, SB 1 changes the definition of a small business under the October jobs legislation such that a small business will be allowed to have 100 employees rather than 50. It would also allow businesses more time to repay the loans under the Small Business Express program's revolving loan fund. These small changes will increase the ability of these programs to assist small businesses expand their employment.

SB 1 would also create protections for unemployed persons who are denied employment on the basis of being unemployed. This provision would address an extraordinarily difficult situation currently faced by many long-term unemployed citizens of our state.

Thank you for raising this important legislation to improve the jobs initiatives that are already helping to grow the Connecticut Economy.